

Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-00

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INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-10 SS-10 OIC-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 IO-15 NSC-01 NSAE-00 SY-06
NA-00 L-03 LAB-04 PM-09 PA-01 MCT-02 SIL-01
USIE-00 SP-02 SPRS-01 /100 W

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R 071423Z OCT 82
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5272
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
USCINCLANT NORVA

BUENOS AIRES 5763

CINCSO FOR INTAFF, CINCLANT FOR POLAD

EO 12356: DECL: 10/6/88

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, AR

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS MARCH OCCURS PEACEFULLY DEFYING GOA BAN

1. (U) SUMMARY: DESPITE GOA BAN, APPROXIMATELY 8000 ARGENTINES PARTICIPATED IN A HUMAN RIGHTS MARCH IN DOWNTOWN BUENOS AIRES ON THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 5. THE MARCH WAS PEACEFUL ACCORDING TO THE PRESS AND THERE WERE NO ARRESTS AND NO VIOLENCE, ALTHOUGH SOME TENSE MOMENTS OCCURRED WHEN THE ARGENTINE POLICE PREVENTED THE MARCHERS FROM APPROACHING THE PLAZA DE MAYO AND THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE MARCH, CALLED "THE MARCH FOR LIFE AND THE COMPLETE RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS," WAS ORGANIZED BY A COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS WITH SUPPORT FROM LABOR UNIONS AND SOME LEFT-IST POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS. THE MARCH WAS PROHIBITED BY THE GOA MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ON OCTOBER 4 BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO THE GOA COMMUNIQUE, IT WOULD "REOPEN OLD WOUNDS FROM THE TERRORIST WAR AND EXPLOIT PEOPLE'S GRIEF."

3. (U) THE ARGENTINE POLICE SHOWED NOTEWORTHY RESTRAINT AND CAREFUL PLANNING IN DEALING WITH THE DEMONSTRATORS. THE POLICE FOLLOWED WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY A PLAN OF SHUNTING THE MARCHERS DOWN VARIOUS STREETS AWAY FROM THE PLAZA DE MAYO. THIRTY MOUNTED POLICEMEN HELD THE DEMONSTRATORS AT BAY UNTIL THE MARCH BROKE UP AT 1910, TWO HOURS AFTER IT BEGAN. THE POLICE WERE PREPARED FOR MANY CONTINGENCIES AS THEY HAD TEAR GAS, WATER CANNON TRUCKS, EXTRA SOLDIERS, AND EXTRA MOUNTED POLICE IN RESERVE. ONE OF THE TENSEST MOMENTS OF THE MARCH OCCURRED WHEN A GROUP OF MARCHERS SAT DOWN MAHATMA GANDHI STYLE IN THE STREET BUT THE POLICE DID NOT RESPOND TO THIS ACT OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE. A REMARKABLE PHOTO BY THE INDEPENDENT WIRE SERVICE DYN APPEARED SHOWING A POLICEMAN COMFORTING ONE OF THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO.

4. (U) AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE MARCH WERE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER ADOLFO PEREZ ESCOBAR AND THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO. THE USUAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS WERE PRESENT, WITH SIGNS THAT ESPOUSED NON-VIOLENCE AND PACIFISM, AND CALLED FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF THE DISAPPEARED. MANY DOCTORS FROM LEFT ST POLY CLINICAL WERE PRESENT, BUT THE DYN DID NOT ATTEMPT TO PROVOKE CONFRONTATION WITH THE POLICE AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS WERE SET BACK IN THEIR CONTROL OVER THE DEMONSTRATORS.

5. (U) COMMENT: THIS WAS THE LARGEST DEMONSTRATION ON TOP HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINE SINCE THE 1970S. IT WAS A SIGN OF THE ISSUE OF THE DISAPPEARED. IT WAS THE LEADER OF THE GOA AND POLITICAL PARTIES -- WILL BE A POWERFUL POLITICAL BARRIER DURING THE ELECTIONS SET FOR OCTOBER 14. IT WAS THE ONLY ONE SHOWING CONVICTIONS OF THE GOA. IT WAS THE ONLY ONE SHOWING THE DEMONSTRATORS DEFYING THE GOA BAN.

6. THE GOA HAS A DIFFICULT DILEMMA: ALLOWING MORE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSEMBLY AND SO FORTH IN CONSONANCE WITH THE POLITICAL OPENING WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HAVING TO LOOM OVER ITS SHOULDER AT THE MILITARY, WHO ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING INTEREST IN AN ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED. LAST WEEK THE MILITARY JUNTA RELEASED A STATEMENT WARNING THAT THE MILITARY AND SECURITY AUTHORITIES WERE BEING SUBJECTED TO A CAMPAIGN QUESTIONING THEIR CONDUCT DURING THE "DIRTY WAR" AND THAT THEY "WILL TAKE ALL PROPER LEGAL PRECAUTIONS TO SAFEGUARD THE MILITARY, SECURITY AND POLICE INSTITUTIONS AGAINST FALSE AND INTENTIONALLY CONFUSING STATEMENTS, INVENTIONS OR OTHER TENDENTIOUS PUBLIC DECLARATIONS AFFECTING THOSE FORCES OR THEIR MEMBERS." (BUENOS AIRES 5644) THE INTENDED AUDIENCES OF THAT MESSAGE WERE, ON THE ONE HAND, THE OFFICER CORPS ITSELF, TO QUIET FEARS AND PROMPT DISCONTENT, AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, TO THE GOVERNMENT AND CIVILIAN SECTORS, TO SERVE AS A WARNING. YESTERDAY'S MARCH UNDOUBTEDLY REINFORCED MILITARY WORRIES AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS TOLERANT ATTITUDE. END COMMENT. SHLUADEMAN

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason